



Fact Sheet

Introduction

Selecting a high quality child care and development program that will help a child grow and develop and meet the needs of the family is an important job. While locating **affordable**, quality care is a challenge for most families, it is of particular concern for low- to moderate-income families, many of whom may be eligible for government-subsidized care. Unfortunately, there is not enough funding to help all of the families that meet the income criteria for a child care and development subsidy. The Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL), with funding from the California Department of Education (CDE), was created to help connect low- to moderate-income families with child care and development programs that offer subsidies as funds and openings become available.

Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL): Overview

LACEL is a countywide list of families seeking assistance paying for child care and development services and meeting the eligibility requirements for child care and development subsidies established by the CDE. The purpose of LACEL is two-fold:

- 1) To help connect income eligible families to child care and development programs with child care and development subsidies as funding and space become available.
- 2) To collect information on the numbers of families eligible for subsidized child care and development, but not served.

Types of State Subsidized Child Care and Development Programs

The California Department of Education (CDE) administers two types of funds for subsidized child care and development:

CDE-funded Child Care and Development Programs

CDE contracts with a number of schools and centers, and agencies administering family child care home education networks to serve children from low- to moderate-income families. The types of programs with state contracts include:

- Preschool programs, half-day, for children ages three and four
- Full-day child care and development programs for children ages birth to five
- Before and after school programs

To be eligible, family income must be at or below 75% of the state median income (\$3,628 per month for a family of three). Families apply to the program for enrollment and the CDE pays the program directly to provide the child care and development services for enrolled families. Families may be required to pay a monthly fee on a sliding scale depending on their income.

Alternative Payment Programs (APs)

APs subsidize child care and development for income eligible families selecting among an array of settings, such as centers, family child care homes, or in the home of the family. Similar to the CDE-funded programs listed above, family income must be at or below 75% of the state median income to qualify and a family may pay a monthly fee on a sliding scale based on their income. Eligible families enroll in the AP, and then select a child care and development program or provider. The AP pays the program or provider directly on behalf of the family. There are 14 AP agencies located throughout Los Angeles County, 10 of which are operated by the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Registering on LACEL

To register on LACEL, the family contacts one of the child care resource and referral agencies (R&R) listed in the last section of this fact sheet. R&R staff will register the family by telephone or provide the caller with a LACEL registration form to complete. The family may return the LACEL registration form to the R&R by mail, facsimile or hand delivery. Child care and development centers funded by the CDE may also register families on LACEL, using the same process as the R&Rs, if they are contacted by a family directly and do not have an opening.

A family with a child currently enrolled in a subsidized program, such as State Preschool or CalWORKs child care, which have time or age limits, may also register on LACEL. Registration on LACEL means that the family may be contacted for another type of program as space becomes available. A family may register only once, however may add additional children not included in the original record as needed (i.e. newborn).

Determining Family Eligibility for Subsidized Child Care and Development

The LACEL registration form requests information on the family's need for child care and development, household income, and family size. This information is used to determine eligibility for various subsidized child care and development programs as outlined above as well as non-state funded child care and development programs such as Head Start.

Note: Families are eligible to register on the LACEL and for child care subsidies regardless of immigration status. No information regarding a family's immigration status is requested on the registration form.

Requesting a Preferred Child Care and Development Program

At the time of registration, the family will be asked if they prefer a particular program (i.e. name of center and/or site). When an opening becomes available, the child care and development program can search LACEL for families wishing to enroll their child in that program. However, programs are required to take families in the highest priority categories first. (*See next section.*)

From Registration to Enrollment: When will the child be enrolled?

A number of factors determine if and when a child may actually enroll in a subsidized child care and development program:

- Availability of government funding to support the number of families eligible for subsidized child care and development, and when an opening becomes available;
- Location of the program with an opening; and
- Type of care available that meets the family's needs or desires (for example, the age of the child and the family's preference for a center-based or family child care setting).

In addition, the State has determined that priority should go to some families in the following order:

- 1) Children receiving services from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and children determined at risk for child abuse, neglect or exploitation by a legal, medical or social service agency.
- 2) Children of families with the lowest monthly income are listed first.

In addition, siblings of children already enrolled in a program and children with special needs may receive priority for enrollment.

Being on LACEL does not guarantee a child enrollment in a subsidized program.

Notification to the Family: Availability of Subsidized Child Care and Development Opportunity

A child care and development program staff member will contact the family using the information provided at the time of registration on LACEL. **Programs need to fill spaces quickly, so it is important for the family to respond promptly.** At the time of the call, program staff will verify the information included on LACEL, and then schedule an appointment to enroll the child. Documents to verify the family's income and work are required at the time of the visit to the program to verify eligibility for subsidized child care and development.

Deferring the Subsidized Child Care and Development Opening

Families will only be contacted by child care and development programs serving the areas (i.e. zip codes) that they indicate when they registered. A family does not need to enroll their child in a program that does not meet their needs. The family record will remain on LACEL so that other programs may contact them as openings become available. However, multiple refusals to accept openings may result in the family's removal from LACEL.

Change in Family Situation: Updating Records

The family should immediately notify the program that registered them on LACEL or the Office of Child Care at (213) 974-1664 or (213) 974-4519 to update their LACEL record. Changes to report include:

- Household income;
- Name, address and/or telephone number;
- Number of adults and/or children in the household;
- Work or school activities; and/or
- New child needing child care or change in child care needs.

For further information on LACEL, please contact the County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care at (213) 974-4519 or visit the Web site at

www.childcare.lacounty.gov

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Child care resource and referral agencies (R&Rs) provide referrals to licensed child care and development programs. R&Rs also register families on LACEL:

Center for Community and Family Services

(310) 217-2935

Downey, Compton, Torrance, Lynwood

Child Care Information Service (CCIS)

(626) 449-8221

Pasadena, Foothill communities

Child Care Resource Center (CCRC)

(818) 717-1000

San Fernando, Santa Clarita, Antelope Valleys

Children's Home Society of California

(562) 256-7490

Bellflower, Cerritos, Lakewood,

Long Beach, Norwalk

Connections for Children

(310) 452-3202

*Culver City, Santa Monica, South Bay,
West Los Angeles*

Crystal Stairs

(323) 421-1086 (Spanish)

(323) 421-1028 (English)

*Gardena, Inglewood, South Central
Los Angeles, Hawthorne, Lawndale*

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF)

(323) 890-1555

*East and Southeast Los Angeles,
Montebello*

Options

(626) 856-5900

(562) 945-2635

San Gabriel Valley, Whittier

Pathways

(213) 427-2700

Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Silver Lake, West Hollywood

Pomona Unified School District Child Development Program

(909) 397-4740

(800) 822-5777

Pomona and surrounding cities